

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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TAGS: ELAB ICFTU ID

SUBJECT: ACTIVITIES OF ARO AND RELATED MATTERS

REF: STATE 016912, JAN 24. 1975

1. THIS EMBASSY HAS NOT REPORTED ANY ARO (ASIAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION) ACTIVITIES RECENTLY BECAUSE NONE HAVE COME TO ITS ATTENTION. IT APPEARS THAT ARO'S ACTIVITIES IN DONDONESIA AND ITS IMPACT ON THE INDONESIAN LABOR MOVEMENT SCENE ARE ALMOST NIL.

2. ARO'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE INDONESIAN LABOR MOVEMENT IS INSEPARABLE FROM LABOR MOVEMENT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LAST TWO YEARS IN INDONESIA. ARO'S PARENT ORGANIZATION, THE ICFTU, HAS FOUR AFFILIATES IN INDONESIA:

A) GASBIINDO (FEDERATION OF INDONESIA ISLAMIC TRADE UNIONS)

B) KBIM (FREE ISLAMIC TRADE UNION CONGRESS)

C) SARBUMUSI (THE MOSLEM WORKERS' UNION OF INDONESIA)

D) GOBSII (FDERATION OF INDONESIA MOSLEM TRADE
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AND LABOR UNIONS)

WHEN THE FBSI (ALL INDONESIA LABOR FEDERATION) WAS CREATED IN FEBRUARY 1973, ALL OF THE THEN EXISTING TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS (INCLUDING THE FOUR MENTIONED ABOVE) WERE MERGED INTO IT. THEY THEREAFTER HAD NO OFFICIAL STANDING LEFT AND WERE EVIDENTLY SUPPOSED TO JUST WITHER ON THE VINE. IN FACT, THEY HAVE NOT YET COMPLETELY WITHERED AWAY. THEY SEEM TO BE KEPT ALIVE BY A GRUEL COMPOUNDED OUT OF THE FAINT HOPE OF A MIRACLE WHICH WOULD CAUSE THE BFSI TO DISAPPEAR, NOSTALGIA FOR THE PAST, THE COMFORT COMING FROM A SHARED EXISTENCE IN ADVERSITY, SHEER INERTIA AND THE EXPENSE OF DOING AWAY WITH THEMSELVES. THEY HAVE ALMOST NO MEANS OF SUPPORT, ALMOST NO FUTURE PROSPECTS AND NO RATIONALE FOR CONTINUED EXISTENCE (OTHER THAN THOSE JUST MENTIONED ABOVE). THE POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH CREATED THEM, DOMINATED THEIR POLICIES, AND IN LARGE MEASURE SUPPORTED THEM FINANCIALLY, ALSO NO LONGER HAVE ANY OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED EXISTENCE AND PRACTICALLY NO FUTURE PROSPECTS. EACH OF THE ICFTU AFFILIATES WAS AFFILIATED WITH ONE OR ANOTHER OF THE DEFUNCT MOSLEM PARTIES, A FACT OF NO LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE AS A DETERMINANT OF THEIR FUTURE. THUS, THE ARO/ICFTU AFFILIATES IN INDONESIA ARE NOTHING ORGANIZATIONS WITH NO POWER AND ALMOST NO INFLUENCE.

3. THE FBSI IS STILL IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING ITS CONSTITUENT UNIONS (SBLPS). NO OFFICIAL DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE FBSI ABOUT POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION AFFILIATION FOR IT OR FOR THE SBLPS. ONE BODY OF OPINION WITHIN THE FBSI THINKS THE SBLPS SHOULD CHOOSE WHATEVER INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT AFFILIATION THEY WISH - SO LONG AS THEY ARE NON-COMMUNIST ONES AND APPROVED BY GOKKAR (GOVERNMENT POLITICAL PARTY), THE MANPOWER MINISTRY, KOPKAMTIB (OPERATIONAL COMMAND FOR THE RESTORATION OF SECURITY AND ORDER), AND BIKIN (STATE INTELLIGENCE BOARD). THE SBLPS THEMSELVES HAVE MADE NO POLICY DECISION ON THIS MATTER AND VERY LIKELY HAVE GIVEN NO SERIOUS THOUGHT TO IT, BEING PREOCCUPIED WITH MORE PRESSING AND IMMEDIATE MATTERS. IT MAY BE NOTED THAT THE KEY POSITIONS OF CHAIRMEN IN ALL OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SBLPS ARE HELD BY GOKKAR MEMBERS. MOST OF THE SECRETARY POSITIONS ARE ALSO HELD BY GOLKAR. IT IS A SAFE BET THAT THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THESE "TRADE UNION LEADERS" KNOW NEXT TO NOTHING ABOUT THE ICFTU AND THE ARO. THIS SITUATION IS NOT LIKELY TO CHANGE DRAMATICALLY IN THE IMMEDIATELY FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

4. THE ICFTU PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE IN INDONESIA

IS SOEKANTO.

HE IS A SWEET FEEBLE AGING MAN WITH
FAILING SIGHT AND A TRADE UNION HEART WHO IS NOT IN
A POSITION TO EXERT DYNAMIC OR ANY OTHER KIND OF
LEADERSHIP ON THE INDONESIAN LABOR MOVEMENT.

5. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE ARO EXECUTIVE BOARD WILL BE
HOLDING A REGULAR MEETING IN BANGKOK APRIL 22-25.
IT WILL PROBABLY BE ATTENDED BY EITHER THE INDONESIAN
REGULAR MEMBER, TAUFIG TJOKROAMINOTO, GOBSI GENERAL
SECRETARY, OR THE SUBSTITUTE MEMBER MAJID SIREGAR,
KBIM FIRST CHAIRMAN - PROVIDED SOMEBODY CAN BE FOUND
TO PAY FOR THE TRANSPORTATION AND EXPENSES. SIREGAR
HAS A FULL-TIME JOB AS INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS MANAGER OF
P.T. SEMEN CIBINONG (WHICH HAS HAD A SLIGHT INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS PROBLEM. SEE JAKARTA A-101 MAY 28, 1974).
TJOKROAMINOTO HAS LANDED HIMSELF A FULL-TIME POSITION AS
A DIRECTOR OF P.T. PKK (A JAPANESE FIRM MANUFACTURING
ZIPPERS IN INDONESIA).

6. ARO SECRETARY GENERAL MATHUR IS DUE IN JAKARTA ON
A ROUTINE VISIT FEBRUARY 16-18. LABATT MAY HAVE A
CAHCNE TO TALK TO HIM DURING THE VISIT.
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